

Research Reveals the African-Indigenous Heritage of Mexican President Vicente Guerrero

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Historians refer to Vicente Guerrero as the George Washington and Abraham Lincoln of Mexico, indicating this great man's stature. Vicente Guerrero was Mexico's second president and is a towering figure in the history of the Americas. Vicente Guerrero was a general commanding Mexico's liberation army during much of its independence movement in the early 19th century, assumed his country's presidency in 1829. He helped to write the Constitution of Mexico and abolished slavery, over 60 years before it was abolished in the United States. The State of Guerrero, in which Ixtapa Zihuatanejo is located, is named after this great Mexican hero.

Many people throughout Mexico and the Americas do not know that Vicente Guerrero was of African and Indigenous descent. March is Black History Month in Mexico and a time to give further tribute to President Vicente Guerrero, a great African-Indigenous hero.

In 2011, a research investigation about Vicente Guerrero's African ethnicity won an award from the Scientific Committee on the Slave Route Project of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Researcher, Maria Dolores Ballesteros from the Mora Institute, was recognized for her analysis of the representations of Vicente Guerrero in Mexico pictorial iconography.



Vicente Guerrero was a general in Mexico's liberation army, helped write is Constitution, and became president in 1829, abolishing slavery.

Dr. Maria Elisa Velazquez, president of the International Scientific Committee for the Slave Route Project of UNESCO, said that Ballesteros was recognized "For an analysis and critique of the way Vicente Guerrero, who was of African descent in Tixtla, Guerrero, was represented more and more white in the paintings of the time, as prejudices developed about Africans and African descendants. This study is very original and valuable because it works with unpublished pictorial sources found in museums and private collections."



Research revealed how historical images of Vicente Guerrero were "white-washed" to disguise his African-Indigenous ethnicity.

The study was one of the winners of a research project about the participation and contribution of African descendants in the Independence of Mexico, organized by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), the South African Embassy in Mexico, the International Slave Route UNESCO, Project AFRODESC of the French Embassy and the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The research was part of the celebration of 2011 as International Year People of African Descent, established by Resolution 64/169 of the United Nations Organization.

Dr. Maria Elisa Velazquez, president of the International Scientific Committee for the Slave Route Project of UNESCO said that "at the end of (Mexican) Independence, in the nineteenth century, there was a boom of racist discourse, prejudice against the African people and African descent, and as a result, we see the attempt to 'whitewash' Vicente Guerrero to disguise his mulatto origin."

In his book, *"The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero, Mexico's First Black Indian President"* (University of Florida Press, 2001), historian Theodore G. Vincent writes that Vicente Guerrero was poor from a Black Indian family and grew up without formal schooling. He taught himself to read and write as he trained his troops in the Sierra Madre Mountains. He took steps to educate and elevate his country's poor and people of color, and serve as his country's first president of African and Native American descent. An essay about Vicente Guerrero's life is available on-line at: www.williamlkraz.com - [The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero, Mexico's First Black Indian President.](http://www.williamlkraz.com)